

# HR Insights

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## Developing and Conducting Employee Surveys

Developing and conducting employee surveys can help employers understand vital aspects of their organizations, such as worker satisfaction and company culture, as well as learn more about the employees who work there. It's important to take note of how employees view their organizations because it can provide information on how to make the workplace more enjoyable, thus strengthening retention rates, improving morale and increasing productivity.

Routinely conducting employee surveys can help provide organizations with up-to-date feedback from their workers. These surveys can be conducted anonymously to encourage employees to communicate their experiences and opinions without fear of repercussion. This article provides more information on the benefits of employee surveys, outlines different types of such surveys and offers best practices for developing them.

### Benefits of Employee Surveys

Employee surveys can provide employers with valuable workforce feedback they may not be able to receive otherwise. Organizations can experience several benefits from developing and conducting these surveys, including the following:

- **Greater employee honesty**—One of the top benefits of employee surveys is that they can empower workers to voice their opinions openly and honestly. While this is possible through one-on-one discussions and small groups, employees are more likely to share their true opinions when they can do so anonymously, especially if what they're sharing reflects negatively on their organizations or the overall workforce experience.

- **More big-picture thinking**—When left unprompted, employees can get lost in day-to-day tasks without thinking of the larger picture, including how their daily activities contribute to organizational success. Employee surveys ask open-ended questions that can spark workers to speak about themselves in relation to the missions and goals of their organizations. This can add value because employees can then see how they contribute to large-scale company initiatives.
- **Increased employee retention**—Employee surveys can help improve worker retention because they can point out issues before they become larger problems for entire teams or companies as a whole. These surveys can help signal early warning signs for employers that their employees are dissatisfied or are considering leaving their roles.
- **Expanded resolution capabilities**—Employee surveys can be the next step in resolving issues within certain teams or organizational departments. They can help employers receive feedback about what issues employees may have with their organizations. These surveys are especially useful when employers are considering where they are and what they want to accomplish going forward.

No employee survey is perfect. For example, some employees may not participate, which can skew survey data. Employee surveys also have downfalls such as not being able to survey everyone, not providing clear results and not being capable of causing immediate change. It's crucial for organizations to take these factors into account when looking at post-survey data pools and drawing conclusions.



## Types of Employee Surveys

There are several different types of employee surveys, which can be adapted to best meet an organization's unique needs. Key survey types include:

- **Annual review surveys**—These surveys are conducted to evaluate employees' performance levels.
- **Company culture surveys**—Such surveys are conducted to measure how companies' behaviors match their intended values.
- **Employee engagement surveys**—These surveys are conducted to measure whether employees feel valued, including by those in leadership roles.
- **Employee satisfaction surveys**—Such surveys are conducted to measure how employees feel in terms of job satisfaction characteristics, such as compensation, benefits and other work-related issues.

No one survey is alike; therefore, it's best for employers to determine the specific reasons they're conducting employee surveys and for whom before selecting a survey type. Once an organization knows the type of employee survey it wants to conduct, it's time to develop the survey.

## Developing Employee Surveys

There are a number of things for organizations to keep in mind when developing employee surveys, including the following:

- **Questions**—The most essential part of an employee survey is the questions being asked. A survey should be composed of a core set of questions that can be compared over time (if it's a survey conducted on a cyclical basis). In addition, questions should help create actionable feedback. Other questions within a survey can be based off timely topics or events. It can also be beneficial to leave room for open-ended feedback or remarks at the end of a survey to provide room for employees to voice additional concerns, opinions or feedback.
- **Format**—An employee survey's format is important because it can skew workers' responses; therefore, employers must carefully

consider the right format for their surveys. This can be multiple choice, open-ended or a mix of both types of questions depending on the data being collected.

- **Timing**—It's imperative for organizations to know when to conduct employee surveys. Something for employers to consider in terms of timing is the workplace events occurring in their organizations at the time. For example, employers may not want to survey employees about job satisfaction during the busiest part of the year when stress levels are at their highest.
- **Length**—Organizations can determine an appropriate length for their employee surveys based on how often these surveys occur. For example, annual review surveys should probably be longer, as workers are only sharing their feedback once a year. On the other hand, surveys sent out more frequently (e.g., quarterly employee engagement surveys) should be shorter.

Once an organization creates an employee survey, it's ready to be conducted. When conducting a survey, an employer should clearly communicate the survey's purpose to employees, encourage participation, emphasize anonymity and share results with the workforce after the data has been sorted. Regardless of the type of survey being conducted, it's critical for an employer to implement improvements after conducting a survey. Making adjustments for the next survey can ensure the survey is pulling the most valuable information from surveyed employees, making this feedback increasingly useful.

## Summary

Overall, developing and conducting employee surveys can provide feedback for employers to gain important insights and help implement workplace improvements. By using these surveys, employers can create spaces for employees to voice their opinions, which can help them feel more satisfied and engaged at work. In turn, this can aid employers in their attraction and retention efforts. For more information on employee surveys, contact Foundation Benefits.